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*Action Memo*  
(Ref) attached  
ER 63-3896  
OSA 2717-63

20 MAY 1963

**MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Central Intelligence**

**SUBJECT : Utilization of the Aerospace Trainer  
NF-104A for Reconnaissance Purposes**

1. I have personally reviewed the flight profiles and performance characteristics of the NF-104A and as far as I can determine there is very little, if any, application for such a system to photographic and ELINT reconnaissance. The main reasons are:

- a. The system has no range capabilities.
- b. It would be very difficult to stabilize the camera systems during the flight trajectory.
- c. The timing of pull-up and the short duration of the ballistic trajectory portion of the flight is such that it would be practically impossible for the pilot to acquire and identify a target to say nothing of attempting to operate the camera at the target under the precise conditions that would be required by shutter speed, focal length, and other camera parameters.
- d. The time limit in the target area makes the system of little use for ELINT purposes.
- e. I doubt very much whether the pilot will have any more than very marginal control of the aircraft during the trajectory phase of the flight.

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2. There are situations where this system might provide us with a very limited and marginal capability. In my opinion the resources necessary to acquire such a system versus the small return we would get for the system makes it economically as well as technically unfeasible.

3. We will monitor the development of this system as it is being designed as an aerospace trainer for any possible potential in the photographic and ELINT reconnaissance area.

JACK C. LEDFORD  
COLONEL, USAF  
Assistant Director  
(Special Activities)

CONCUR:

25X1A



*A* Deputy Director (Research)

AD/OSA:JCLedford:bwl (20 May 1963)

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# ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

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OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1. Executive Director

DDCI

5/10

10 May

10 May

LBR

11 May

HSC

2.

EX. DIR.

13 May

13 May

LBR

3.

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*Expedite*

*③ Please note General Carter's note dtd 11 May, and take action by Friday.*

*SUSPENSE! 17 May*